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The Moratorium on Moral Revulsion

A RECENT national conference of foremost leaders in the main fields of professional education opened with a paper by an eminent physiologist. His argument ran as follows:

"Our grandfathers spoke of Values, spelling them with capital letters. . . . Science recognizes no Values . . . Faith is in the last analysis, either an acceptance of the transcendental significance of the ephemeral ecstasies and miseries of the organism, or else an apotheosis of the unknown, and history reveals that neither equation has been fruitful. . . . Truth, inspiration, faith, natural law, love, progress have been degraded to lower case letters and survive only to enrich our language, even as the words bewitch, beguile, enchant, fascinate, natural and supernatural, survive to us from the ancient lore of witchcraft. The transcendental values of the past are gone. . . . Proud man . . . has discovered himself to be a creature struggling to live in a world from which has faded the last faint ray of transcendental light. . . . 'I believe in the lust of the flesh and the incurable loneliness of the soul.' . . . Viewed biologically, happiness is the only ultimate goal, the fine art of attaining it the only morality, and confidence in the potential effectiveness of conscious effort the only faith. . . . Medicine, engineering, business, law and philosophy or theology are useful to the human organism because they help it to meet these basic biological requirements."

There is nothing novel in these views. They are reminiscent of Bertrand Russell half a century ago, of Omar Khayyam nearly ten centuries ago, and of Epicurus more than twenty centuries ago. Only two things about them are surprising: that they are proclaimed as though new, the fruitage of scientific advance in the past hundred years; and that they are redeemed neither by the appeal to "unyielding despair" which ennobled *A Free Man's Worship* or by the disavowal of sensuality which lifted Epicureanism into an ethic of disciplined resignation. The first fact reveals the historical ignorance of our contemporary naturalists. The second suggests the depths to which contemporary natural-

ism has slipped from the classic expositions of this philosophy.

The importance of these views lies not in their novelty or their truth, but in the response which they evoked from more than a hundred of the leading educators of the country. Some of the philosophers and theologians present offered gentle rejoinders. (One playfully suggested that a typographical inconsistency had crept into the paper; the author had inadvertently spelled plato and even his own name with a capital letter!) For the most part, this militant and dogmatic advocacy of consistent naturalism was greeted with tolerant acquiescence. Few seemed to feel that it was seriously in error. Fewer still appeared able to define and expose its fallacies.

The general response to the best-selling "Kinsey Report," even among highly intelligent people, has been closely parallel. The most disturbing thing about the current vogue of *The Sexual Behavior of the Human Male* is not the facts it sets forth; although as a recent editorial in this journal pointed out, if they are trustworthy, they reveal a prevailing degradation in American morality approximating the worst decadence of the Roman era. The most disturbing thing is the absence of a spontaneous ethical revulsion from the premises of the study, and inability on the part of its readers to put their fingers on the falsity of those premises. For the presuppositions of the Kinsey Report are strictly animalistic; this bias underlies the Introduction and controls the interpretation of the data at every point. Few have raised ethical queries regarding the sponsorship of this study by a responsible national research body, and its financing by one of the great Foundations dedicated "to promote the well-being of mankind throughout the world."

These two illustrations point both to a widespread deadening of ethical sensibility which might prompt a vigorous moral disclaimer, and to absence of well-grounded conviction which would make possible a reasoned and valid refutation. They suggest how generally those who do not practice naturalistic hedonism in their lives are unable to confute naturalistic hedonism with their minds and unwilling to

challenge it with their spirits. In reaction from exaggerated prudery, we have slipped into convictionless complacency.

This is not the first appearance of such a philosophy in the modern period. Speaking of the sweep of materialism in the nineteenth century, Whitehead points out that we were saved from the victory of that philosophy not by the arguments of philosophers and theologians (all too generally they bowed a servile knee or sought some facile reconciliation), but by the rebellion of the poets. He cites Wordsworth in particular:

"Wordsworth in his whole being expresses a conscious reaction against the mentality of the eighteenth century. . . . Wordsworth was not bothered by any intellectual antagonism. What moved him was moral repulsion. He felt that something had been left out, and that what had been left out comprised everything that was most important."

Here is the spontaneous reaction of a healthy

spiritual consciousness always. Dr. John Baillie of Edinburgh, seeking to discover the genius of faith by examination of its most characteristic expressions, offers two illustrations: "a man of high character and noble ideals who nevertheless seems to be haunted by crippling misfortune," and "a young man of serious mind and high ideals of conduct who, in his study of natural science, discovers his mind persuaded by the arguments of a mechanistic materialism." In each instance, delivery comes—in the first, from despair, in the second, from disbelief—not primarily through intellectual refutation but through ethical revulsion, "a sense of recoil." This is the response of faith.

An eminent literary critic has recently put the matter in a nutshell: "We are all implicated in the decadence of our civilization and it is only to the extent that our dull indifference is fused to a white heat of moral indignation and activity that the future can have any promise of greatness."

H. P. V. D.

Unity and Freedom in the Christian Church

Some Reflections on the Coming Meeting in Amsterdam of the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches

EDWARD L. PARSONS

THE eyes of the world will *not* be turned to Amsterdam next August nor will men's minds be much concerned with what the Assembly of the World Council holding its first meeting there may say or do. Their concern will still be, as it is today, chiefly with the question of food and jobs, or if they look out beyond their own immediate needs, with the possibility of the "hot war" which the selfishness and ineptitude of men is day by day threatening to bring upon us. Yet the eyes of the world might well be turned to Amsterdam for what is to happen there concerns very definitely the deepest issues of human life. Men and women representing officially most of the Christian world outside the Roman Church, representing more than one third of all Christians will be meeting to consider their common faith, their common responsibility to the world and their relation to the churches which have sent them.

It has been customary to speak of each of the great Ecumenical Conferences since 1910 as epoch-making, as having unprecedented importance in Christian history. However true that may be of any one of them, together they certainly have unprecedented importance and the World Council in a very real sense gathers up and combines the meaning of them all. That meaning concerns pri-

marily the life of the church or the churches; but it is its relation to the great underlying social movements of today that takes it out beyond its ecclesiastical setting and suggests its world-wide significance.

There is nothing particularly obscure about that relationship. It lies on the surface. It has often been pointed out. Everyone knows what the past four or five hundred years have done to and for struggling humanity. The medieval structure of the Western world broke on the rediscovery of the central meaning of the individual in society. His freedom, the release of the powers of his mind and will and his responsibility for a share in controlling his own destiny took precedence of corporate interests. The disrupting of the authoritative church, the controversies and schisms, and the sorry picture of a divided Christendom were part of this movement of society. They were part of the price the church was paying for freedom. But centuries of freedom interpreted in great areas of social life as "every man for himself" have been slowly bringing men to realize that what they seek can be found only in community.

The movement of society has swung back to collectivism in some form. Abased in Nazism, dis-

torted in Russian Communism, imperfectly reached for in Social Democracy and conservative American New Deals it has given direction to history. Into the stream have been swept all the nations of the world through the scientific discoveries which have made isolationism impossible and revealed to us all our complete inter-dependence. The world is still finding its way to freedom but it must be freedom in community.

Now the Ecumenical Movement and the World Council are the churches' response to what has been going on in society. The problem for the latter is how to keep freedom within the community life of humanity. The problem for the former is to safeguard the "liberty of the Christian man," for liberty is the very breath of life of the Gospel; but to safeguard it within the one Body of Christ, for without unity, the health, the wholeness of the Body is impaired. Society and the church have the same kind of problems for they have the same God and live in the same world. He who in his righteous purpose brings judgment upon the nations brings judgment likewise upon the church. Its weakness and apostasy are revealed. It has drifted with the stream and forgotten its One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism. To use an overworked phrase again, it stands under judgment; and in judgment it rediscovers the fulness of its faith and is recalled to neglected truth.

No one can doubt but that the crisis through which the world is passing has stirred the church to its depths. A new life is breathed into it, and with that new life has come a reawakened sense of its responsibility to the world and for the world. The hand of God which falls in judgment points likewise to the task which lies ahead. That is the task of prophetic interpretation and prophetic leadership which since the days of the Hebrew prophets God has laid upon his people. Perhaps never save in the days of Augustine and Gregory and those of the Reformation has responsibility been so great. It has certainly never been so universal. For the first time during a great social crisis the voice of the church may be heard around the world. But that voice which tries to reveal to the world that its unity is in God and its freedom in Christ has been weak and hesitant and uncertain. It has been the churches speaking and not the church. A divided church seems at best somewhat hypocritical in asking the nations to unite. On the other hand churches *seeking* unity can reveal the deep meanings of human society, can lead, can inspire, can help the nations to their goal. The World Council is the witness that there is no hypocrisy in the Christian appeal for "One World."

What the World Council can actually do in this matter seems slight. We need have no illusions on that score. But that is not the point. God has given his church a great task. Only he can know

the innumerable mysterious ways in which the whole movement, the fact of the World Council and the deliberations of the coming Assembly at Amsterdam may open channels for him. Our task is to do his will. The point is that the World Council has far more significance for the churches if we see clearly its potential significance for the world. It witnesses to the church. It witnesses likewise to the world. If the Christians of the cooperating churches can see this double significance there can never be any very widespread idea that the Council is unimportant, nor that it is *man-made*.

In a striking pair of articles which appeared some two years ago in *Christendom*, Dr. Visser t' Hooft, in discussing the significance of the World Council, dwelt at length upon the questions which arise as one attempts to define the relation of the Council to the churches. It is obvious that the Council is not the church. It is still only an instrument of the churches; but it is nevertheless under pressure to speak as the church. Indeed, to quote Dr. t' Hooft, the churches expect it to be "ready to speak the word of guidance which is so urgently desired for the life of the churches themselves and for the life of the world." If that be true two further reflections seem of special importance as we come to the August meeting of the Assembly. Both are suggested by Dr. t' Hooft. Both owe much to his illuminating discussion. The first concerns the relation of the Council to God. The second deals with the problems of representation. One is perhaps theological; the other is certainly a practical matter.

And first to theology; in the various conferences in which the Ecumenical Movement has been finding expression, the churches have all agreed that the church is God-made, a divine institution. They have differed much as to just what is included in the "gift" of God; whether a particular kind of ministry, an elaborate scheme of doctrine, a definite interpretation of the sacraments or what you will; but they have all accepted the initiative of God. The church is God-made not man-made. But, so the question runs in men's minds, here in the World Council we have an entirely different thing. It is an expedient; a mere effort to get together because of our weakness when separated; it suggests a hope; it looks forward to a goal. But it is a poor kind of artificial structure as compared with the organic living body of Christ.

But is that really true? In the first place and in general is not the Christian faith always sure that God takes the initiative. Whatever we may think about the relation of man's will to God's purpose we are all agreed that "we love because he first loved." We are all agreed that from him come "all holy desires, all good counsels and all just works" and that as man seeks to do God's will the strength which serves him is the strength of God. "My grace is sufficient for thee." The revelation of God

in life is not confined to those things which in our common talk are called religious. Interpreted in one way Paul's statement that "the powers that be are ordained of God" is, and in history has been, misleading; but it is sound teaching if it means that when men are seeking in their community life the good purposes of order and justice and freedom, in other words the right adjustments of men to one another, the structure they build has its validity in its witness to God. Certainly in this sense the World Council is God-made.

But one comes to the same conclusion when one approaches it from the standpoint of the churches and the church. The very existence of the World Council is proof that none of the churches is the church. That God-given *una sancta* does not exist in actual life. Some of the churches which constitute the Council hold that they are in some special sense (doctrinal purity, apostolic ministry, unbroken tradition) the church which other bodies are not. But no one of them claims to be the whole church. Even Rome, which will not enter the Council because she will not admit any questioning of her claim to be the church, does not claim that. The particular churches or communions are what they are not *per se* or in themselves, but simply because of their relationship to Christ himself; they partake of or share in his life. They are part of his Body which is the whole church. When they come into closer relationship with one another in the World Council they are coming clearly and certainly a step nearer to restoring or achieving the wholeness of that Body. They are not losing but gaining in nearness to God. They are achieving more fully his purpose. If my little group of Christians which I call a church is so called because it partakes of the life of the Body, it is still more a church when it is sharing a larger common life in God. One could press the reasoning further; but enough has been said to warrant the faith that this World Council is no mere man-made expedient.

And in that certainty lies the real authority of the Council to speak for the churches. This matter of its authority, i.e., of what it can actually do in representing the churches is something which will probably be worked out only in time and somewhat by trial and error. The limits of that authority on one side are, however, perfectly definite. The Council will have no constitutional authority over the constituent bodies. It cannot say to the Baptist Churches "you must surrender your view of baptism"; nor to the Anglican Churches "you must give up Bishops." It cannot commit any church to any particular policy concerning world affairs or international friendship, nor require specific financial support of any project which lies outside the matters included in the agreement of a church to become a member. But apart from these limitations it seems reasonable to say that on the great matters

which concern all the churches, matters such as world peace, freedom of conscience and of worship, minority rights, racial tensions and exploitation of the less-privileged groups, the World Council will speak as *authoritatively* as any one of its constituent bodies.

To all intents and purposes these non-Roman churches are democratic in their way of life. If they are in any sense *ruled* from above they have chosen their own rulers. Their people are probably all of them little disposed to accept as binding upon them any utterance of their higher ruling groups merely because it issues by a majority vote from a convention or assembly. That is certainly true in America. In other words, with Selden, they don't believe that the odd man is the Holy Ghost. But on the other hand they do recognize authority when it has been built up from beneath. They do recognize leadership. They are ready to have what are called representative bodies speak for them so long as they are free to differ. If that be true, the World Council, because it is built up from beneath and because its constituent bodies and their members are free to differ, can speak with real authority upon the urgent questions which beset the church or the churches.

Indeed one may go further. If what we mean by authoritative is that an utterance is really representative, not of a chance majority, but of the best insight of the corporate Christian mind, we are likely to find it just as certainly in a small group of devoted and praying leaders as in the larger consensus of a General Assembly. That small group may actually represent *my* particular view far better than the person whom I have had some indirect share in choosing. To sum it up; the Council, so long as we build it up from beneath, keep the structure fluid and recognize that its utterances depend for their weight upon their interpretation of God's will in Christ, can actually speak with as much authority as can the governing bodies of any of its constituent members. Indeed that is too limited a statement. It speaks with more authority because it represents a greater, an immensely greater body of Christians. Numbers don't count we say, and then we say they do count. Both are true.

And one other matter deserves consideration. As we here in America have moved along towards greater unity we have found good Christians who are definitely troubled at the prospect. They fear that if we should succeed in bringing together all our varied, diverse denominations into one great church we would be moving directly towards the danger of ecclesiasticism. One great governing body would wield undue power. It would imperil not only the liberty of the Christian man but that of the state. The answer to this fear which has genuine grounds for its existence lies entirely in the thing we have been emphasizing—the building up

from beneath. As long as there is a place for the prophetic voice, there is no real danger of ecclesiasticism. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." God will take care of ecclesiasticism if we give him a chance. It seems safe to say that the day of the authoritative church as we see it, e.g. in Rome, is really past. Just at this moment, when the collective movement has been distorted by the destruction of freedom, there comes to it through that strange subconscious unity of human kind a moment of new power and

of new attraction for the troubled souls of many people. But the moment (short in God's sight, long years perhaps for men) must pass. Authority for the free man as for the free Christian can lie only in that which he has had a share in constituting. We who have our share in constituting the World Council can hope for it and pray for its real authority in shaping and guiding into unity the life of the churches. Significant in its meaning for the church and the world of today, it is likewise promise and prophecy of the future.

Religious Experience in Russian Captivity

The following letter was recently received by the dean of an American theological school. For various reasons personal references in the letter which identify the author have been eliminated. It may suffice to say that he is a Christian scholar who participated in the church-state conflict in Germany in the 1930's, was drafted into the army, was wounded many times, and finally taken war-prisoner on the eastern German front in the summer of 1944. Addressed to the faculty of the American theological school, the letter, apart from indicated omissions, reads as follows:

When I returned home a few days ago after four years of war imprisonment in Russia, the dean of our theological faculty gave me a CARE package sent by you. Please permit me to assure you of my obligation and hearty thanks. Since I was released from Russia as sick and unable to work, since I must lie here in the hospital for several weeks and have brought with me as mementos of the past difficult years starvation-edemas and malnutrition, this gift is for me a means of achieving strength more quickly and hence of making possible the earlier resumption of my work. . . .

May I make a few observations about these four years in Russian captivity? They have been, I believe, decisive for my religious development. Perhaps in later years I will be able, even more than now, to say as Joseph in Egypt said of himself: "They thought to do evil but God thought to do good." I will confine my reflections to two spheres: 1) a few theological insights, and 2) some social ethical results of this period.

1) The theological understanding which I gained during these four years was not of a "scientific" sort but existential, in Soren Kierkegaard's meaning of that concept. It began with the breaking down of an apparently established theological system, the vitality of which we believed had been demonstrated in the years of the church conflict in Germany. And

yet, when one is literally suspended for a long time, day and night, in an abyss of Nothingness, when death in its whole demonic and unmasked form surrounds one, then before this destructive Nothing the whole dogmatic construction falls to the ground and of themselves the words of the Psalmist, which our Lord spoke on the cross, come to one's lips: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But just this human consciousness of abandonment by the Father reveals itself as a sign of his immediate nearness; the yawning void of the absolute Nothing reveals itself as the medium in which God seizes his children, shakes them and leads them to safety. So there suddenly appears, in the midst of the apparent destruction of one's whole systematic theology, the knowledge of Existence, that our God is a reality who works in this world and takes hold of us just in the vacuum of Nothingness. In place of gnosis comes epignosis, to speak in Pauline terms; recognition takes the place of studied knowledge, a recognition which literally so reaches to the decisive point of existence that all questions apart from the great vertical relation—God—Jesus Christ—our lost, death-bound sinfulness—all questions and appearances apart from this are reduced to adiaphora.

Our whole life in the vast and endless comfortlessness of Russian imprisonment, where no "Siberian angel" like Elsa Brandstroem came to us, revealed this epignosis so decisively to us as power, that it could not again become a "Christian doctrine," but imposed itself upon us as Truth in the form of a way that has to be followed. Each day could only then be affirmed before God if one stepped into it as a way of following Christ. Christian thinking as formal activity became wholly and completely meaningless; the way through the surrounding night and through all the miseries and hunger had to be taken as a way of the cross under the grace of God. That these journeys in the night with and in Jesus Christ were made in the light was no other-worldly fanaticism but the message of Jesus Christ himself to us through the Bible, and this became living present reality to us.

As a result of the German situation in general and of our situation as war-prisoners in Russia in particular, the question about the meaning of history came up for us again and again. In the misery and questioning of imprisonment, what Paul said in Romans 9-11 about the great example of Israel became a source of decisive epignosis. Do not we theologians much more than before need to try to understand history, including the history of the church, after the manner of Paul as an eschatological history of salvation, always directed and led and moving toward the end? If we always follow only historical lines, that is to say, always confine ourselves to the observation of intra-worldly causalities, even in the case of the church, is not this merely obedience to a requirement of 19th century historiography? Is it not necessary to illuminate church history theologically—without neglect of methodical source-criticism—and to give up the apparently objective genetic history?

What came to us in imprisonment in the way of understanding, came in the midst of an externally bitter existence. We were all forced to hard manual labor amidst the most primitive conditions. I worked for three years in construction, ditch-digging, street-repairing and wood-cutting, by day and night, at temperatures varying from plus 40 to minus 45 (Centigrade). We were required to work between eight and twelve hours, but at the end because of malnutrition for only four hours, until I became unfit for any work. But because of this manner of life truths were carved into the heart which, being beyond all mere knowledge, cannot be stated in doctrines that can be learned, but can only be apprehended in a life in Christ.

2) In our various places of work, in industrial cities, and in the country, we frequently came together with the Russian population. It was possible for me as for many of my comrades to study, not only ideologically but in practice, genuine Marxism as formed by Lenin and Stalin. It was instructive that we could observe not only the last war-year but also the development of a victorious state in three years of peace. I am neither political scientist nor sociologist and can therefore offer my observations only as a theologian. Nowhere in the world (and I have seen much poverty, etc.), did I meet such misery among the working people and such crude exploitation of them as in the Soviet Union. Probably every German prisoner who returns from Russia and who does not keep silent because of fear will bear witness to this impression of the primitive standard of life on the part of the Russian industrial and, particularly, rural population, and of its spiritual enslavement. Soviet state capitalism makes the worker a slave of work and of the speed-up, without affording him the opportunity to record any personal advancement.

But, much as Soviet practice unmasks the Utopi-

anism of the communistic system, and leads to the expansion of communism in order to prove by creating world chaos that Russian conditions are ordered and paradisiacal, nevertheless the social question challenges us all and especially the Christian church. Convinced that communistic power is demonic, that it represents a metaphysical demonry which can be met on this plane only by the power of the truth in Jesus Christ, the call of God to all of Christendom in all the world remains as something that cannot be ignored: it is the call to *love of the neighbor*. We German theologians, particularly in the Confessing Church, put the grace of God in Jesus Christ so much in the center of the picture that words like these of James (2:15f) seem like heresies: "If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?"

I know that it is a special gift of American Christianity to emphasize the necessity of the social gospel, and with what I have said I only want to make clear that for me the necessary open antithesis between the Christian church and Communism must, at the same time, be a wrestle on the part of the church for quick solution of the social problem on the basis of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You will allow me to dispense with factual reports about my Russian imprisonment. Everything is still too near for one to be able to place these experiences in a proper perspective. Pardon me if I have written too extensively. I only intended to express through a detailed letter my warm thanks for your brotherly help.

Bonhoeffer Fund

Our readers may remember that during the past years we have been raising a special fund for the 11 orphaned children of the Bonhoeffer Family in Germany whose three fathers were executed by the Nazis. Our readers were good enough to subscribe \$2,000 to this fund in the last two years. The fund is now exhausted but the needs continue. We would appreciate renewal of gifts from any who may be interested. Checks should be made payable to the World Council of Churches, and sent to Dr. Henry Smith Leiper, World Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York, or to the office of *Christianity and Crisis*.

Thanks!

We would like to express our gratitude to the hundreds who have, in response to our request, sent in the names of prospective subscribers. Over 2,000 names were sent in. We greatly appreciate this continued mark of interest and support on the part of our readers.

The World Church: News and Notes

Lay Training Centers Exert Rising Influence

A marked trend away from individual pietism in the German church toward greater acceptance of social responsibility is evident from the rising influence of new lay training centers, according to Dr. Eberhard Mueller, director of the Bad Boll center, near Stuttgart.

"More than 10,000 people, mostly estranged from the church, attended meetings in the eight evangelical academies which have grown up in the last two years," he said. "Doctors, politicians, teachers, scientists, managers and labor leaders have studied the relation of Christianity to their vocations and to society's problems."

He explained that the increased social interest relates to the experience of the church under National Socialism.

"On the one hand the sermon of the Evangelical Church was dealing with the cultivation of a private piety, especially regarding the justification of the individual sinner before God, and it left the dominions of public life to adopt their own standards," he stated. "On the other hand cultural Protestantism carried on academic lectures on social-ethical problems, thereby trying to set up a Christian order of values."

"However, men's personal meeting of God was at best cultivated in private seclusion. Thereby it happened that even pious circles in Germany met the national socialistic terror in a purely passive way, reacting just as pietistic churches throughout the world do to state tyranny. Unfortunately, the German church resisted only where national-socialistic brutal forces interfered with the innermost branch of Christian teachings. Among the members of the 'confessing church' of all denominations (the wing of the church known for its resistance to Hitler) wartime experiences aroused the desire to testify to the entirety of Christian life by launching on a new course. Therefore, in a very short time the Evangelical Academy has become a vital part of the ecclesiastical and public life in Germany."

News Bureau, National Lutheran Council.

Problems Facing the Christian Enterprise in Asia

Addressing the staff of the World Council of Churches on his return from his journey among the churches of East Asia, Bishop Stephen Neill recently spoke of his impressions concerning the whole Christian enterprise in that part of the world. Bishop Neill felt that, in spite of the immense difficulties that face them, the churches of Eastern Asia showed a spirit of hope and determination. Everywhere he noticed that Christians had a sense that their people needed a spiritual basis and unity, in view of their new national independence, which the traditional religions were not able to give them.

In China, on the other hand, there was a strengthening opposition to the Christian Gospel, mainly due to the spread of Communism. Chinese Christians were sharply divided in their attitude towards Communism.

Some of them, especially the younger, impressed by the Communist policy of giving agricultural workers a stake in the land, were inclined to look upon their advance as being for the ultimate good of the country. The older Christians, generally, were convinced that in Communist controlled areas organized Christian life was becoming impossible. There had been instances of persecution, sometimes brutal and cruel, of Christian workers.

Speaking of his impressions of Japan, the Bishop reminded his hearers that to declare that the war was "a mistake" was different from repentance. The Japanese as a whole had small appreciation of the immense wrongs that they had inflicted upon so many Asian peoples, and there did not seem to be any basis for a new national life. He referred to the organization unity among Christian groups that the Japanese war government had brought about, not only in Japan, but also in the Philippines, in Indonesia and elsewhere. When the pressure of the Japanese government was withdrawn, those churches which had a more highly developed doctrine of the church had left this unity, though several churches were still remaining together. There was the same need in Asia, as in the West, for the faithful, for steady seeking of the basis of true Christian unity.

Speaking of some of the outstanding needs for the Christian enterprise Bishop Neill stressed the paramount requirement for a strengthening of missionary work in many parts of Asia, particularly in view of the great openings which were before the churches. In Japan, for example, there were only some 300 Protestant missionaries, whereas the Roman Catholic Church had 3,000 foreign workers ready to take up the work. The same was largely true in other countries. There was a great need also for the strengthening of the quality and training of Christian ministers. In several countries the laity were in advance of the ministry in education. People still relied upon the older pre-war leadership, and younger men were not coming forward sufficiently to take their places.

E. P. S., Geneva.

Anglicans Asked to Reject "Holy War"

A warning that the Church of England must not take part in a "holy war" against Communism was sounded by Dr. Cyril Forster Garbett, Archbishop of York, in his presidential address to the Convocation of York meeting in London.

"Confronted with atheistic teaching and the non-ethical practice of modern Communism, many are now calling upon the church to join a 'holy war' against Communism, employing every spiritual weapon and indiscriminately excommunicating all Communists," Dr. Garbett declared.

"This line has already been taken by the Roman Catholic Church, and many British churchmen are advocating that we follow it. However, the Church of England must oppose Communism, not by political ac-

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tion or mere denunciation, but by its teaching and its life."

Dr. Garbett said one result of using political and spiritual weapons indiscriminately against all who called themselves Communists would be to make a breach with millions of Orthodox and other Christians.

"It might also," he warned, "prejudice our position with the Communist rulers of these people, and give militant atheists an excuse for demanding resumption of religious persecution."

R. N. S.

Poland: The Position of the Churches

The last world war has brought great changes in the distribution of church members throughout the churches in Poland. Owing to the systematic extermination of whole communities of Poles by the Nazis, and also as a result of cession of territory to the U.S.S.R., the number of church members has fallen considerably.

The church with the largest number of members was, and still is, the Roman Catholic Church, which had 22,900,000 members in 1939, and now has about

19,500,000. The Orthodox Church which had some 4,000,000 members before the war, now has only 430,000, while the membership of the Polish Protestant Churches during the same period has fallen from 750,000 to 250,000.

Before the war the Orthodox and Protestant church members, together with the practicing Jews, formed 36% of the total population; today they form only 4%. The Roman Catholics, who used to be 64% of the total population, are now in the overwhelming majority, forming 96% of the total.

But this fact is counterbalanced by the fact that the other churches now enjoy equal privileges with the Roman Catholic Church before the law, whereas before the war—in spite of the freedom of conscience anchored in the Polish Constitution of 1921—they did not receive recognition as organized church units. The State observes this innovation to the letter. In the army there are now both Roman Catholic and Protestant chaplains. This is important, especially in districts where, as in East or West Prussia, the proportion of Catholics to Protestants is estimated as 4:1 (whereas up to 1945 the proportion was 1:4). However, the higher departments of State are keeping a careful watch to see that the religious minorities can preach their faith without restriction.

E. P. S., Geneva.

Mr. Myron Taylor and the World Council of Churches

The General Secretariat of the World Council of Churches asks us to publish the following statement:

Mr. Myron Taylor, personal representative of President Truman to the Vatican, has recently visited, at the request of the President, several officers of the World Council of Churches to discuss with them how the Amsterdam Assembly may best serve the interests of peace. The World Council leaders explained to Mr. Taylor that in preparing for Amsterdam, the Provisional Committee has given very serious consideration to this aspect of the Assembly's task, but that the churches which will be represented at the Assembly desire to accomplish this task in complete independence. The churches consider that it belongs to the very nature of their mission that they should not be identified with any secular powers or policies and believe that they serve the interests of peace best when they speak exclusively in the name of the Lord of all nations. That is also why no invitations have been sent to any governments to be represented at the Assembly. But the problems of the present international situation will be fully discussed at Amsterdam in the light of Christian faith and principle.

The World Council leaders also pointed out that they had worked for years on the problem of making the Amsterdam Assembly as inclusive as is consistent with the specific Christian and ecumenical purpose of the World Council. In this matter political considerations play no role and the only question is whether the churches concerned are ready to cooperate with their sister-churches on the Christo-centric basis of the World Council of Churches. True ecumenicity knows no political or national boundaries.

E. P. S., Geneva.

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